



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Implementing an Assessment Prioritization Process

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Recent History of Prioritization Project

- **Presented to CCC in February 2014 and released for Council and public comment , with May 1 due date**
- **Subsequent phone conference with ASMFC and meetings with S. Atlantic SSC and with Northeast Regional Coordination Council**



Comments Received From:

- **Formal response:**
 - **Gulf Mexico FMC**
 - **Ocean Conservancy**
 - **Four individuals**
- **Draft comments, with full response under development:**
 - **NRCC**
 - **S. Atlantic SSC**
 - **ASMFC**



Comment Summary

- **General support for a prioritization process**
- **General support for more update assessments vs. full benchmarks**
- **Support for using fishery value, not weight, as basis for importance**
- **Clarification needed on relative role of NMFS vs. Councils in implementation**
- **Support for use of less complete assessments for lower priority stocks; e.g. data-limited methods**



Some Concerns

- **Some want to see prototype implementation before being able to comment further**
- **Flexibility to adapt to changing conditions may be limited**
- **Politics may still trump the proposed process**
- **Process may de-emphasize some current good assessments that are protecting stocks from overfishing**
- **Workload of implementation can detract from assessment efforts**
- **Surveys and data collection need attention too**



Some Implementation Ideas

- **Should measure recreational importance as value, not weight**
- **Role of Productivity-Susceptibility Analysis was supported by one and questioned by another; needs resources to do this work**
- **Need good indicators (Rumble Strips) in between less frequent assessments**
- **Coordination of assessments for associated species has merit**
- **Database needs more information on performance of past assessments**
- **Tiered assessment needs should be coordinated with management needs for non-target stocks**
- **Management strategy evaluation and risk analysis are tools to make a prioritization system more quantitative; i.e. what is the marginal value of conducting each assessment?**



Updated Short-Term Implementation Steps

- 1. Create database of needed information as an added table in the Species Information System – summer 2014;**
 - a) Major step is creating fishery importance scores**
- 2. Edit document using comments received and to clarify roles of SSCs and Councils and Commissions – summer 2014;**
- 3. Prototype prioritization system in at least one region – fall 2014; propose Northeast and Pacific west coast**
- 4. Discuss with National SSC – fall 2014;**
- 5. Present updated approach to CCC – first opportunity**
- 6. Make database available to groups charged with setting priorities for regional assessments – winter 2015**